

NEWS  
RELEASE

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## **Cardiovascular Disease Still No. 1 Killer of Utahns**

*54% of Utah Adults are Overweight or Obese and 74% Do Not Get Regular Physical Activity*

(Salt Lake City, UT) — Cardiovascular disease is still the leading cause of death and disability for both men and women in Utah, according to a new Utah Department of Health (UDOH) report on cardiovascular disease. The report, *Milestone Report 2002: Cardiovascular Disease in Utah*, shows that an average of 3,800 Utahns die each year from heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure. And an even greater number are left incapacitated by congestive heart failure, heart attack, and coronary artery disease.

“As baby-boomers age and women continue to be less likely to receive treatment, these numbers are likely to increase over the next twenty years,” said LaDene Larsen, director of the UDOH Bureau of Health Promotion. “Fortunately, we know that Utahns can decrease their risk factors for cardiovascular disease by adopting healthy behaviors, such as not smoking, being physically active, maintaining a healthy weight, and controlling high blood pressure and cholesterol.”

*Milestone Report 2002* is the first to analyze risk factors and emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and deaths due to cardiovascular disease in Utah. Although Utahns have slightly better risk factors than the rest of the nation, the data indicates there is still vast room for improvement. Utah adults appear to be at the highest risk, 74 percent of whom reported not engaging in regular physical activity, compared to 78 percent of U.S. adults. Utah teens fared only slightly better than adults. Although 77 percent reported engaging in vigorous physical activity, the highest rate of vigorous physical activity among youth in the U.S., another 75 percent reported they do not eat the recommended minimum daily requirement of five servings of fruits and vegetables.

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***Other milestones from the report include:***

**Adults (reporting in 2000)**

- Fifty-four percent of Utah adults were overweight or obese, compared to 57% of U.S. adults.
- Thirteen percent of Utah adults age 18 or older smoked, compared to 22% of U.S. adults.
- Only 21% of Utah adults reported eating five servings of fruits and vegetables each day, less than the 24% reported by U.S. adults.

**Adolescents (reporting in 1999)**

- Almost 15% of all Utah high school students were overweight or at risk for being overweight, compared to 26% of U.S. high school students.
- Twelve percent of Utah high school students (an estimated 17,000 teens) reported current cigarette use compared to 35% nationally.

Data sources include the Utah Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, the Utah Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Utah death certificates, and the Utah Hospital Discharge and Emergency Department Databases. The report provides Utah statistics for all cardiovascular disease and for specific conditions such as coronary heart disease, heart attack, and congestive heart failure. The report also looks at the utilization of health care services to diagnose and treat coronary heart disease, the largest component of cardiovascular disease.

In his January State of the State address Governor Michael Leavitt proposed a 1,000 Day Plan, under which are separate state agency 1,000 Day Plans. The UDOH plan enhances the Governor's "Invest in People" and "Enhance Utah's Life Quality" 1,000 Day Plan strategies by providing useful data to guide interventions and public awareness. Today is day 255 in the UDOH's 1,000 Day Plan. The *Milestone Report 2002* is just one of the many 1,000 Day Plan Milestones the Department of Health has achieved this year.

For more information about the UDOH Cardiovascular Health Program or to request copies of the *Milestone Report 2002*, please contact the Utah Cardiovascular Health Program at (801) 538-6142. The report is also available online at [http://health.utah.gov/ibis-ph/bhp\\_pubs.html](http://health.utah.gov/ibis-ph/bhp_pubs.html)

***About UDOH Cardiovascular Health Program***

*The UDOH Cardiovascular Health Program is funded by a combination of state and federal monies, including a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U50/CCU821337-01. The program is implementing a statewide plan with community partners to address cardiovascular risk factors and promote heart healthy messages to assist Utahns in making healthy choices at school, at work, and in the community.*